

## Module A: Comparative Study of Texts & Contexts Elective 2

### Intertextual Perspectives - *1984* & *Metropolis*





## Advanced, Module A: Comparative Study of Texts and Context

### Elective 2: Intertextual Perspectives Rubric

#### The rubric

You must have a deep understanding of the focus and key elements of the rubric. The HSC question will be grounded in the rubric.

*In this elective, students compare the **content** and **perspectives** in a pair of texts in order to develop their understanding of the effects of **context, purpose and audience** on the shaping of **meaning**. Through exploring and comparing perspectives offered by a pair of texts, students examine the ways in which particular social, cultural and historical contexts can influence the composer's **choice of language forms and features and the ideas, values<sup>1</sup> and attitudes** conveyed in each text. In their responding and composing, students consider how the treatment of similar content in a pair of texts can heighten our understanding of the values, significance and context of each.*

Module A is a comparative study of two texts through an exploration of the different perspectives in the texts to arrive at an understanding of the role that a composer's **social,**

---

#### <sup>1</sup> Understanding Values

*All texts are constructed. As a result, they often reflect social values – the views, attitudes and beliefs – of the period in which they are produced. Although there are many values that do not change – we all believe that murder is immoral, for example – many of the other values that we hold are in a state of constant flux. Social values can be considered dominant, emerging or oppositional. Dominant values are those held by the majority of people in a society. Emerging values are beliefs or attitudes held by a growing number of people in a society. When studying historical texts, these values may eventually become dominant. Oppositional values are beliefs which are in direct opposition to those held by the majority of people in a society.*

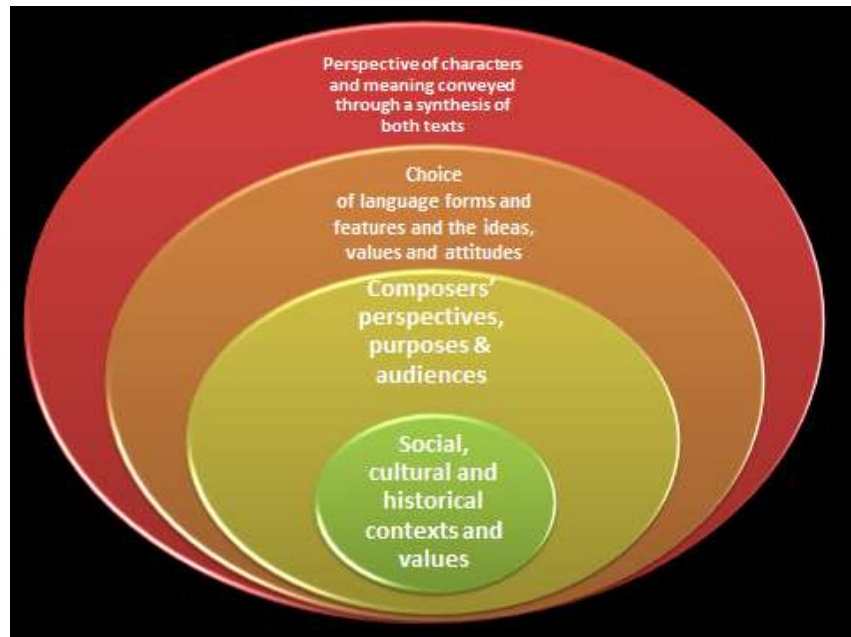
<http://lessonbucket.com/vce-media/units-3-4/media-texts-and-societys-values/media-texts-and-societys-values/>



**historical and cultural** context, purpose and audience play in the shaping of the meaning of text.

The main concepts are:

1. **Contextualisation:** *'A way of regarding situations, facts and texts and evaluating their relative significance'* (NSW BOSTES).
  - How *Metropolis* and *1984* reflect the social, cultural and historical context – the period and ways of thinking of that time of their composers.
  - How Orwell and Lang's social, cultural and historical context, purpose and audience influenced their choice of language forms and features and the ideas, values and attitudes conveyed in their texts.
  - How the perspectives presented in *Metropolis* and *1984* reflect the social, cultural and historical context and purpose of their composers.
2. **Perspectives:**
  - The way characters create see the world based on their assumptions, values and experiences.
  - How the perspectives of the characters in texts reflect the composer's context, purpose and audience.
3. **Intertextuality:**
  - How the perspectives of the characters and the content of both texts when compared and contrasted inform your understanding of the influence of the composers' contexts, purpose and audiences.



## Key questions

As you examine *Metropolis* and *1984* consider how you would respond to these key questions:

1. What are the composers' perspectives of their contexts and times?
2. What are the perspectives of the characters in <i>Metropolis</i> and <i>1984</i> ?
3. How and why are you able to know their perspectives?
4. Why do they see the world and others this way?
5. Do their perspectives change and, if so, why?
6. How do their perspectives reflect the world of their composers?
7. What key ideas are conveyed through these perspectives?
8. Why and how are the perspectives of the characters and the ideas conveyed in <i>Metropolis</i> and <i>1984</i> different and similar?
9. How does context influence the composer's purpose, perspective and choice of language forms and features and the ideas, values and attitudes conveyed in each text?
10. How and why are texts products of their times?



## **Responding to Module A**

Module A is a comparative study so you must be able to compose an integrated response that compares and contrasts the perspectives presented in the texts and the key ideas that are conveyed. This is achieved through an analysis of form, structure, content, textual details and features and how the purpose and context of their composers has influenced these choices. This analysis should demonstrate that you clearly understand the role that context plays. Therefore, ensure that you:

- Develop notes as you study the texts that inform your understanding and enable you to compose a response with confidence.
- Understand Lang and Orwell's perspective and purpose and those aspects of context that have clearly influenced the representation of the perspectives present in the texts and the key ideas.
- Develop a range of conceptual thesis statements that reflect your point of view.

### **Thesis or Line of Argument**

To compose an effective integrated response, you must be able to develop a strong thesis or line of argument. This has been reinforced in successive Notes from the HSC Marking Centre that have observed that high-range responses demonstrate the following:

- Conceptual understanding through a thesis that is furthered through well-chosen textual evidence, analysis and evaluation.
- A personal engagement with the conceptual demands of the question.

A thesis or line of argument should reflect your perspective and understanding of what you have learned about the role that context plays in influencing the form, content, ideas, crafting of characters and their perspectives and the language features. It should be used to shape and direct



your integrated response and should be supported and/or challenged by your analysis of *Metropolis* and *1984*.

To arrive at a conceptual understanding of both texts return to the framework of the rubric and the key questions on page 5 of this booklet. Ask yourself what you have discovered about what drove Lang and Orwell to use the dystopian genre to comment on their worlds and what messages they wanted their audiences to remember.

### **Suggested opening paragraph**

Present your overarching conceptual thesis or line of argument that reflects the module and responds to the question. Then make a statement that responds directly to the question using some of the question's key words or synonyms. Follow this with two to three supporting ideas through references to *Metropolis* and *1984* that will enable you to respond to the question and support and develop your thesis.

### **Body**

- Begin your paragraphs with a topic sentence that is linked to the previous paragraph and furthers the key ideas.
- Provide textual references and an analysis to support your ideas. Ensure that you revise language and film techniques.
- Weave throughout the essay references to the context and how it has influenced the texts.
- Move between the texts with a balanced analysis. E.g. A paragraph on how the genre, form and structure frame the way that characters' perspectives are revealed would either include both texts or feature a paragraph on each that presents a comparison and contrast.

### **Conclusion**

Return to the question and provide a decisive conclusion to your argument.



## Possible Module A questions

In this task you will be assessed on how well you:

- evaluate the relationships between texts and contexts
- organise, develop and express ideas using language appropriate to audience, purpose and context.

The HSC questions will be grounded in the rubric. Consider how you would respond to the following questions:

1. George Orwell's *1984* and Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* use the dystopian genre to confront their audiences with the key concerns of their times. Identify one key concern and discuss how and why it is revealed through the perspectives of the male and female protagonists in both texts.
2. To what extent does your comparative study of *Metropolis* and *1984* demonstrate through the perspectives of the characters the importance of not compromising core values?
3. 'When we consider the intertextual connections between texts through an exploration of the characters we come to realise the significance of a composer's purpose and context.' Focusing on two key characters from each text examine the influence of purpose and context.
4. 'Discovering the connections between texts enhances our understanding of our humanity.' Discuss this statement in relation to what you have discovered about humanity through the perspectives of the characters in *Metropolis* and *1984*.
5. 'Despite differing contexts, *1984* and *Metropolis* present similar warnings regarding control.' Discuss how both composers communicated these warnings.
6. 'In what ways does a comparative study accentuate the distinctive contexts and perspectives of your texts?'



## The Dystopian Genre

The roots of the word dystopia - 'dys' and 'topia' - are from the Ancient Greek for 'bad' and 'place'. The setting is usually in an undesirable place set in the future where individuals are subjected to extreme control. The texts can be used by composers as cautionary tales that warn of what society could become if it continues on its current course and humanity compromises its core values. In the case of *1984* love, compassion, honesty and faith have been deliberately expunged.

The following are some of the conventions:

- The people of this world are controlled through technology, propaganda and are under surveillance.
- There is usually an enigmatic authority figure.
- Conformity is valued and independent thought is suppressed.
- There is social stratification with stark contrasts between the workers and those in power.
- The protagonist questions his or her world. The responder is aware of the world's shortcomings through the perspective of the protagonist.

### ***Metropolis* and *1984***

- Both texts are set in the future where life is bleak for some of the citizens. *Metropolis* is set in a futuristic city, with towering skyscrapers traversed by biplanes and monorails, sustained by the spiritless workers who toil continuously at the giant machines that run the world above. The emphasis on the internal conflicts and psychological damage is achieved through the sets and locations. *1984* in a world in a constant state of war that has reduced London to a decaying, depressing place.
- Control of the people in the future world is oppressive. In *Metropolis*, the city is controlled by the autocratic industrialist Joh Fredersen who rules over the city from his Tower of Babel. He maintains control through secrecy, subterfuge and oppression. In *1984*, technology has advanced to enable those in power use technology to achieve total

control of the citizens who have become soulless automatons. Truth has been manipulated through propaganda and mind control. The autocrat is now an anonymous Big Brother who demands total love and unquestioning adoration. Orwell's uses the genre through the perspective of Winston Smith to develop the reader's sense of terror and fear about what power is and how it is wielded in this future world. Limited third person narration allows the reader access to Winston's feelings and thoughts.

## Context

You only have 40 minutes to respond to the Module A essay question so it is important to select those aspects of context that you believe have influenced Lang and Orwell's purpose, perspectives and the content, form, characters' perspectives, ideas and language features.

### ***Metropolis* context**

*'There has perhaps never before been a time so determined as ours in its search for new forms of expression. Fundamental revolutions in painting, sculpture, architecture, and music speak eloquently of the fact that people of today are seeking and finding their own means of lending artistic form to their sentiments. Film has an advantage over all other expressive forms: its freedom from space, time, and place. What makes it richer than the others is its natural expressiveness inherent in its formal means. I maintain that film has barely risen above the first rung on the ladder of its development, and that it will become the more personal, the stronger, and more artistic the sooner it renounces all transmitted or borrowed expressive forms and throws itself into the unlimited possibilities of the purely filmic...'* (F. Lang, Die Literarische Welt, 2, 1 October 1926).

Metropolis has been identified as being zeitgeist conscious. Its iconography, set design, costumes, symbolism, expressionism, art deco and direct references capture the spirit and culture of the times.

- **Historical context: 1914-1918:** World War 1 – Germany was defeated and the country divided. Soldiers returned to high unemployment and hyper-inflation that reduced them to abject poverty. Germany was humiliated and was required to accept losses of territory,

including Alsace-Lorraine and much of present-day Poland. Germany also had to agree to pay substantial war reparations. The Treaty of Versailles was interpreted by many Germans as a betrayal by their own government. A feeling of resentment and mistrust characterised the political environment of the Weimar Republic. During the tumultuous early years of the Republic, assassinations were frequent and were used to express discontent over the condition in which Germany found itself following the Treaty of Versailles. The two groups that found new voice in the political playground of the Weimar Republic were the extreme left and the extreme right. The clash between traditional conservatism and modern progressivism transformed Berlin into a battleground on which diametrically opposed parties fought for what they saw as the future of Germany. The establishing sequence in the film features compliant, subjugated men whose spirits have been broken just like the returned soldiers.

- **Cultural context:** The end of censorship in 1918 allowed for artists to uninhibitedly express themselves both on canvas and on stage. The direction which art took during the Weimar era reflected the desire to create something new and in direct opposition to the



conservative culture of the Empire. Conservative and radical right-wing critics decried the new freedom as decadent and immoral. They claimed that the end of censorship threatened Germany by allowing insidious, “degenerate” artists, especially American jazz and fashions, to poison and dilute German culture with degenerate art. The Eternal Gardens where the privileged men socialise is hedonistic and frivolous. A conservative revolution emerged in response to modernism. Right winged conservatives wanted to restore traditional German values. They rejected

foreign materialism and American influences. The proponents preached that the world of

modernism and materialism was doomed, and that Germany needed to embrace higher cultural and spiritual values – Volkisch culture.

- German expressionism was an artistic genre that originated in Germany in the early 1900s, and is broadly defined as the rejection of Western conventions, and the depiction of reality that is widely distorted for emotional effect. Expressionist art and films reflected deeply humanistic concerns and an ambivalent attitude toward modernity. It was concerned with the powers of darkness, with people trapped by their environment and with claustrophobia pervading everyday life. Art historian Norbert Lynton captured the philosophy of this movement:

*'All human action is expressive; a gesture is an intentionally expressive action. All art is expressive - of its author and of the situation in which he works - but some art is intended to move us through visual gestures that transmit, and perhaps give release to, emotions and emotionally charged messages. Such art is expressionist.'*

German expressionist films featured the following:

- ✚ Stripes, angles and geometric forms sliced from the stark contrasts between light and shadow.
- ✚ Buildings of sharp angles, great heights, and crowded environments.
- ✚ Deliberately exaggerated and dramatic lighting and camera angles.
- ✚ Acting was in direct correlation to the violent brushstrokes of Expressionist painting or the staccato utterances of Expressionist poetry, an outward interpretation of the extreme inner emotions felt in extreme situations.
- ✚ Contrasting light and shadow – chiaroscuro. *'It was their expressionist nature which impelled many a German director of photography to breed shadows as rampant as weeds...These efforts were designed to bathe all scenery in an unearthly illumination marking it as scenery of the soul'* (Kracauer, 1947).
- ✚ Locations were deliberately artificial – “meant to represent a state of mind, not a place”. The aim for most German expressionist was to eliminate nature for a state of absolute abstraction. This gave them more control over their creation.

➤ **Social context:**

- The Weimar period (1918-33) born in defeat and commenced with massive debt from reparations of World War I. It was beset by disastrous inflation (1923-24), unemployment, and frequent changes of government, and nearly toppled by coup attempts. A growing gap between the rich and the middle and working class emerged.

*'Of course all the little people who had small savings were wiped out. But the big factories and banking houses and multimillionaires didn't seem to be affected at all. They went right on piling up their millions. Those big holdings were protected somehow from loss. But the mass of the people were completely broke.'*<sup>2</sup>

- The Weimar Republic was a tumultuous period of strikes and unrest. In response to this unrest and dissatisfaction, the idea of 'volkgemeinschaft' emerged. This was a plan to remove class tensions and create a 'people's community'. The clash between traditional conservatism and modern progressivism transformed Berlin into a battleground on which diametrically opposed parties fought for what they saw as the future of Germany. It enabled Hitler to rise through the ranks of the National Socialist German Workers' Party supported by conservative elites. German artist George Grosz describing life in the 1920's in Germany stated:



*'The capital of our new German Republic was like a bubbling cauldron. You could not see who was heating the cauldron; but you could merely see it merrily bubbling, and you could feel the heat increasing. There were speakers on every street corner and songs of hatred everywhere. Everybody was hated: the Jews, the capitalists, the gentry, the communists, the military, the landlords, the workers, the unemployed, the Freikorps, the Allied control commissions, the politicians, the department stores, and again the Jews. It was a real orgy of incitement, and the Republic was so weak that you hardly took notice of it.'*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <http://alphahistory.com/weimarrepublic/anonymous-view-1923-hyperinflation/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://alphahistory.com/weimarrepublic/grosz-golden-age-of-weimar-1946/>

- Technological change led to the scientific management of labor and industrial mass production. America that had influenced the change through an inflow of capital (Dawes Plan) was viewed by many as a materialistic, mechanised society ruled by exploitation, commercialism, and a lowbrow mass culture. Everything capitalist modernity stood for—its challenge to authority, its drive for unbridled economic competition, its disavowal of spiritual and religious values, and its commercialisation of culture—collided head-on with still intact patriarchal, feudal, and authoritarian structures. The Weimar Republic embraced the ideas of F. W. Taylor, an American mechanical engineer who sought to improve industrial efficiency. He developed a concept of work design, work-measurement, production control and other functions, that completely changed the nature of industry. Each worker was a cog in the wheel. He could not do without the wheel, but wheel could easily replace him. They became replaceable and de-skilled. Henry Ford applied Taylor's principles in his automobile factories. Many were critical of 'Fordism' and what was perceived as repetitive work under the dictates of a clock – represented in the film by the highly stylized, rationalised and fully alienated labor. Buszek<sup>4</sup> states that in Metropolis

*'the machine represents the underlying metaphor that places the film within the 1920s discourse on modernity and technology. The city, the workers' bodies, and the film itself are all associated with the machine. The city draws its energy from machines below ground; lights flicker, and flashes of lightning shoot across the sky after the workers destroy the gigantic generator that powers the city. And the city itself is organised like a machine that self-destructs as soon as any part malfunctions. When the workers rebel against their dehumanized status, they are presented as malfunctioning cogs in the city's machinery. Thus management's plan to replace them with robots is only logical: "Machines will be the workers of the future."*

Wartime mobilisation, in which the soldier sacrificed his individual freedom to the demands of autocratic planning, seemed the ideal model for industrial production. It was

---

<sup>4</sup> "Metropolis: City, Cinema, Modernity," in Timothy O. Benson (ed.), *Expressionist Utopias: Paradise, Metropolis, Architectural Fantasy* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1993): 146-165. - <http://www.mariabuszek.com/kcai/Expressionism/Readings/KaesMtrpls.pdf>



the first modern war in which machines (from machine guns to bomber planes) decided the outcome. The consequences of World War 1 - thirteen million dead, eleven million crippled - were not forgotten by the mid- 1920s. Millions of veterans with prostheses and mechanical body parts—half machine, half human.

- There was an emergence of a sexually liberated and emancipated woman perceived as a threat by the extreme right who believed that women should follow a more traditional role, namely staying at home to raise and care for the children. Futura rips the social fabric asunder seducing the workers into self-destructive acts – an agent provocateur who must be destroyed.

View the YouTube clips at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPOCjkMv\\_h0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPOCjkMv_h0) and [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKSsvN\\_b\\_qc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKSsvN_b_qc)

## **1984 Context**

### **➤ Historical Context:**

- Spanish Civil War: Orwell fought against Franco in the Spanish Civil War in the mid-1930s, supporting the socialist left. He was not a communist, but a dedicated Democratic socialist who believed that the government, not private enterprise, should control the production and distribution of goods, and as such he was greatly concerned about the lives of the poor and working class. Orwell's experiences in Spain during the civil war were to occupy him for the rest of his life: *'In Barcelona, during all those last weeks I spent there, there was a peculiar evil feeling in the air – an atmosphere of suspicion, fear, uncertainty, and veiled hatred.'* He witnessed the use of propaganda and the rewriting of history. Orwell's beliefs about the control of the past, including the recent past, also derived from his experiences in the Spanish civil war, where he found that *'no event is ever correctly reported in a newspaper, but in Spain for the first time I saw newspaper reports which did not bear any relation to the facts.'*

-

- Rise of fascism: The rise to power of dictators such as Adolf Hitler in Germany and



Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union inspired Orwell's mounting hatred of totalitarianism and political authority. In February 1944 Orwell wrote in *As I Please*: *'The really frightening thing about totalitarianism is not that it commits 'atrocities' but that it attacks the concept of*

*objective truth: it claims to control the past as well as the future.'* O'Brien, a member of the ruling Inner Party in 1984, tells Winston: *'The party seeks power entirely for its own sake. Power is not a means; it is an end.'* The novel, like *Metropolis*, reflects Sigmund Freud's - an Austrian neurologist - theories on power - man needed, and wanted, a dominant figure to rule and protect him *'The leader of the group is still the dread primal father; the group still wishes to be governed by unrestricted force; it has an extreme passion for authority, ... a thirst for obedience.'*

- World War II and the dropping of the atomic bombs: *'As I write, highly civilized human beings are flying overhead, trying to kill me.'* The war represented an intellectual crisis for him. He had been an antimilitary socialist in the late '30s, convinced that only a revolution could set Britain right. Now, with those German bombers above, he realised he was a patriot after all. On October 26, 1945, the *Tribune* published Orwell's essay *"You and the Atom Bomb,"* in which it is evident that Orwell considered the rise of a small number of authoritarian superpowers to be imminent. He never recovered from the tragic implications of the dropping of the bomb.

#### ➤ **Social Context:**

- Escalation of technology and industrialisation impacted on the lives of the workers. Orwell lived among destitute coal miners in northern England, an experience that caused him to give up on capitalism in favour of democratic socialism. His socialism was pragmatic and anti-utopian. He believed in social equality and, like Lang, improving the conditions of the workers, and was critical of the injustices of capitalism.

➤ **Cultural Context:**

- Existentialist ideas were evident in some of the literature of the period between and after the wars. *1984* represents the shift in the way of thinking where there was still some hope to a Nihilist perspective of the world where life is futile. Winston is the romantic anti-hero writing himself into existence, an existentialist hero who embraces conscious self-identity.
- The Fascist leaders, such as Hitler and Mussolini recognised the power of language to control and persuade. Foucault had explored the power of language. *1984* recognises how language is a powerful force that can be used to generate propaganda and exert control. Similarly, Lang who witnessed Hitler's use of rhetoric represented its power through Maria and Futura. *'Political language . . . is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind'* (Orwell).

## **Lang's perspective**

The films of Fritz Lang depict an entrapping, claustrophobic world in which people are controlled by larger forces. His overriding theme is the struggle against fate and humanity's flaws:

*'I think from the beginning, one of my first films, the fight of man against his destiny or how he faces his destiny has interested me very much. I remember that I once said that it is not so much that he reaches a goal, or that he conquers this goal - what is important is his fight against it.'*

Lang who claimed he was *'looking at Germany in the future'* advocates religiously inspired reconciliation between classes. He considered that women should be Madonnas, like his own mother, pure and saintly.



The doctrines of Catholicism shaped Lang's worldview, his politics, and his cinematic vocabulary. The language of *Metropolis*, the themes, the images and the characters are rooted firmly in the language of Judeo-Christian theology.

Lang disapproval of his father's relentless pursuit of profit and success grew into rebellion and a cold-hearted dislike but he had an undying reverence for his mother. His service WWI as a lieutenant ensured that he empathised with the plight of the returned soldiers.

## Lang's purpose

Lang is not driven by a political agenda like Orwell:

*We imagined...an idle class living in a great city thanks to the subterranean work of thousands of men on the verge of rebellion, led by a daughter of the people.'* (Lang).

The city of the same name exemplifies capitalist hubris, leading to machines that control the lower classes that ultimately revolt. *Metropolis* responded to the German cultural zeitgeist of rationalisation and mechanisation.

Fritz Lang orchestrates the film montage, music, camera angles and narrative development in a way that intensifies the contrast between the life of the workers and the life of the rulers. The epigraph represents his view that the employer and the worker should find harmony and accord. *Metropolis'* ending is utopian in its desire for social peace.

Funded in part by Paramount Pictures and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, and UFA had formed a distribution deal with the two companies whereby they were '*entitled to make any change they found appropriate to ensure profitability*'.

## Orwell's perspective

- '*We are all drowning in filth. When I talk to anyone or read the writings of anyone who has any axe to grind, I feel that intellectual honesty and balanced judgment have simply*

*disappeared from the face of the earth. Everyone's thought is forensic, everyone is simply putting a "case" with deliberate suppression of his opponent's point of view, and, what is more, with complete insensitiveness to any sufferings except those of himself and his friends.'*

- *'The Road to Wigan Pier': 'I worked out an anarchistic theory that all government is evil, that the punishment always does more harm than the crime and the people can be trusted to behave decently if you will only let them alone.'*
- *'We are living in a world in which nobody is free, in which hardly anybody is secure, in which it is almost impossible to be honest and to remain alive..'*
- *'Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written directly or indirectly against totalitarianism and for Democratic Socialism as I understand it.'*
- In *Coming up for Air* (1939) the war is just around the corner, and the main character George Bowling is convinced that the world will not be the same afterwards. The book is filled with nightmare visions of how it will be after the war; visions that would become *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: *'The world we're going down into, the kind of hate-world, slogan-world. The coloured shirts, the barbed wire, the rubber truncheons. The secret cells where the electric light burns night and day, and the detectives watching while you sleep. And the processions and the posters with enormous faces, and the crowds of a million people all cheering for the Leader till they deafen themselves into thinking that they really worship him, and all the time, underneath, they hate him so that they want to puke.'*

## **Orwell's Purpose**

*'I write it because there is some lie that I want to expose, some fact to which I want to draw attention, and my initial concern is to get a hearing... to fuse political purpose and artistic purpose into one whole.'*

## Intertextual Perspectives

*'We are living in a world in which nobody is free, in which hardly anybody is secure' Orwell.*

'What piece of work is a man?' – tragic loss of life, totalitarianism, poverty and oppression

Anxiety, disillusionment & despair

Loss of values of love, compassion, faith, trust & integrity

*'I am profoundly fascinated by cruelty, fear, horror and death' Lang.*

## Intertextual Perspectives

Nietzsche's philosophy of nihilism arises from rejection, from outrage at the world, from the pain that the world causes.

Expressionism  
&  
existentialism

Nihilism

Dystopias

*'If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face—forever.'*



## **Values in *1984* and *Metropolis***

The rubric requires that you understand the way that values expressed in the texts have been shaped by the context of the composer:

*Ways in which particular **social, cultural and historical contexts** can influence the composer's choice of **language forms and features and the ideas, values and attitudes** conveyed in each text*

At this point in your study, you should have a very clear understanding of the social, political, historical and personal context of the composers. Do you understand what is meant by 'values'? As human beings, we all have our own values, beliefs and attitudes that we have developed throughout the course of our lives. Our family, friends, community and the experiences we have had all contribute to our sense of who we are and how we view the world. In the same way, the characters in your texts reflect the experiences of the composers.

Values are principles, standards or qualities that an individual or group of people hold in high regard. These values guide the way decisions are made. A value may be defined as something that we hold dear, those things/qualities which we consider to be of worth. A 'value' is commonly formed by a particular belief that is related to the worth of an idea or type of behaviour.

### **What are Winston's values which put him at odds with the state?**

The junk shop is a metaphor for ALL the values which Winston holds:

- He values the natural world and is repulsed by the concrete urban jungle surrounding him.



- He values the concept of family, largely based on his own memories, and is repulsed by the actions of the Parsons children.
- He values the world of the past obsessively, and is thus drawn to the world of the Proles where some of his values are evident. He has a sense of existential belonging which he feels can only be achieved by reconnecting with the past.
- He values truth and is appalled by censorship. This drives him to start keeping a diary.
- He values beauty, art and literature as shown in his visits to the junk shop.
- He values his own privacy. His individualism drives him to rebellion.
- He values personal memory and can connect it with a sense of well-being.
- He values the importance of shared knowledge, discussion and debate and yearns for meaningful connections with other people.

#### **How does Orwell's context link to these values?**

- Orwell described himself as 'lower upper middle class'; saw himself as a 'democratic socialist'. He believed in a socialism based on the values of truth, justice and freedom. He dreamed of an ideal society, with tolerance and respect for human dignity.
- Anti-imperialist despite his father having been employed in the Opium Department of the Indian Civil Service during the period of the British Raj, and Orwell himself having worked as a policeman in Burma.
- He saw the horror of totalitarian government of the Nazi regime during World War 2, and the Stalinist regime in the post-war period.
- Frank H Thompson Jr wrote in 'Orwell's Image of the Good Will': *'The man of good will is the man of old-fashioned virtues, and Orwell believes in these. But in a world that believes in the new, the old-fashioned is but a foolish memory. In 1984 there is nothing old-fashioned because the world is created a new every day: a perpetual Eden turned upside down'* (College English, Volume 22, Issue 4 (Jan., 1961), 235-240).
- Orwell believed that the road to Nazi totalitarianism had been paved by men who thought tradition could be overlooked and for whom there were no longer moral absolutes. These

men looked upon the rest of mankind as an animal-like labouring force, a reserve of cheap labour. Only the elite gain the privilege of being treated like humans. Orwell attacks this growing ethic in all of his writings. ( Luke Thompson, *The Last Man: George Orwell's 1984 in Light of Friedrich Nietzsche's Will to Power*, Spring 2003)

- The original title for *1984* was *The Last Man in Europe*. This represented a Europe where the government has total control and Winston is the last thinking man. O'Brien points this out to Winston after the interrogation when he says, '*If you are a man, Winston, you are the last man. Your kind is extinct, we are the inheritors....you shall see yourself as you are. Take off your clothes.*'
- Orwell was concerned with the growth of power worship and the attack on the concept of objective truth. He saw Hiroshima, concentration camps and gulags, genocide and slavery, but Orwell singled out truth as the greatest casualty of his time. (Reilly, Patrick. *Nineteen Eighty-Four: Past, Present, and Future*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1989).

'Doublethink destroys truth and is a necessary tool for this society' (Orwell). He wrote:

*'One has no way of verifying the facts, one is not even fully certain that they have happened, and one is always presented with totally different interpretations from different sources. Probably the truth is undiscoverable but the facts will be so dishonestly set forth in that the ordinary reader can be forgiven either for swallowing lies or for failing to form an opinion ...'*

## **Ideas that connect both texts**

### **Exploitation of society in the pursuit of profit**

Both texts examine the manipulation and control exerted over the citizens. In *Metropolis*, it is the workers who are marginalised and exploited. During the Weimar Republic, capitalist modernity with its competitive pursuit of profit, adoption of Americanisation of the workplace and industry, new technologies and suppression of the workers witnessed the emergence of National Socialism that originally consisted of returned soldiers and the middle class who suffered during the 1923 year of hyperinflation and high unemployment.



Orwell who had witnessed firsthand the impact of capitalism on workers espoused the views of democratic socialism that supported the rights of the workers.

A connected idea is the peril of technological mastery without social justice.

### **The illusory nature of free will**

Both texts explore the loss of individuality and suppression of free will. In *Metropolis*, the workers are represented as being mindless robots who have been defeated by work. Ironically, the sons of the city are also controlled by immersing them in world of hedonism. In *1984*, all citizens are subjected to control. Winston knows that he will never be free. His personal rebellion will be short lived.

### **The pursuit and abuse of power**

*'Never again will you be capable of ordinary human feeling. Everything will be dead inside you. Never again will you be capable of love, or friendship, or joy of living, or laughter, or curiosity, or courage, or integrity. You will be hollow. We shall squeeze you empty and then we shall fill you with ourselves.'*

Lang and Orwell had witnessed the pursuit and abuse of power. Orwell warned of the rise of totalitarian regimes that had seized power and subjugated its people, such as Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin:

*'The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power. Not wealth or luxury or long life or happiness; only power, pure power...'*

Frederson and O'Brien represent the totalitarian abuse of power. Both use power to control and manipulate others.



Another idea that both texts raise connected to the abuse of power is the ramifications of a cult of a charismatic leader. A second related idea is the relationship between language and power.  
(Research Foucault and Bakhtin)

### **The marginalisation of women**

In both texts, the male gaze is dominant. Maria and Futura are seen through the gaze of the men in the *Metropolis*. Lang's conservative criticism of the liberation of women in the Weimer period is evident in the objectification and overt sexualisation of the women who serve the sons of the city. Lang adored his mother and believed that women should be caring, virtuous and maternal. Maria is given a strong voice to represent the worker's rights but this continues the focus on maternal care and compassion. The burning at the stake of Futura eliminates the archetype of overt sexuality.

In 1984, the perspective is masculine. Daphne Patai in her essay 'The Orwell Mystique' argues:

*'In the world of Nineteen Eighty-Four, although men fear women because they may be spies, in general the assumptions of male centrality and female 'otherness' survive intact. Julia's love for Winston makes him healthier, whereas O'Brien's attention destroys him physically and mentally, but Winston's true alliance, as we see is with O'Brien, who engages him in combat and recognizes him as a worthy opponent – a recognition that means more to Winston than Julia's love". Patai maintains that women in Nineteen Eight-Four are always marginal characters, seen largely through the eyes of men. The romance between Julia and Winston is far less impartial in the novel, and occupies less space than the 'romance' between Winston and O'Brien. This is clear from the novel's beginning when Winston fears and hates (because he desires) Julia while admiring and being drawn to O'Brien.*

*The novel reflects a masculine world. The women in the narrative appear as caricatures. They are party secretaries, Party fanatics, Party wives like Katherine or the stereotypically helpless housewife Mrs. Parsons...In describing Julia's work in Pornosec Orwell asserts that the only ones assigned to the department are unmarried girls because they are thought to be less vulnerable than men to the corrupting influences of pornography. Orwell includes the detail that 'all the works in Pornosec except the heads*



*of the departments were girls'. Although Orwell reveals male dominance to be a continuing feature of life in Oceania, he does not treat this as worthy of analysis and does not raise the issue of its role in a totalitarian society.'*

## Resources

### *Metropolis*

- <http://emanuellevy.com/comment/metropolis-detailed-synopsis-of-restored-version-3/>
- [http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/film/movie/contents/notes\\_on\\_metropolis.pdf](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/film/movie/contents/notes_on_metropolis.pdf)
- <http://pazit.wordpress.com/2010/04/06/midterm-analysis-of-the-film-metropolis-lang-1927/>
- <http://www.mariabuszek.com/kcai/Expressionism/Readings/KaesMtrpls.pdf>
- [http://www.genders.org/g32/g32\\_ruppert.html](http://www.genders.org/g32/g32_ruppert.html)
- <http://moria.co.nz/sciencefiction/metropolis-1927.htm>
- <http://unaffiliatedcritic.com/2013/02/metropolis-1927-independent-study-in-world-cinema/>
- <http://old.bfi.org.uk/sightandsound/feature/43>

### *1984*

- <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/08/12/george-orwell-s-letter-on-why-he-wrote-1984.html#>
- <http://www.wisegEEK.com/>
- 'Narrative viewpoint and the representation of power in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*', Brigid Rooney,  
<http://openjournals.library.usyd.edu.au/index.php/SSE/article/viewFile/565/534>
- <http://www.itiscannizzaro.net/Ianni/booksweb/sito1984/home/index.htm>
- <http://www.itiscannizzaro.net/Ianni/booksweb/sito1984/papers/characters.htm>
- <file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/1984hall.pdf>



## Essay Questions

In your answer you will be assessed on how well you:

- demonstrate understanding of the **meanings of a pair of texts** when considered together
  - evaluate the relationships between texts and contexts
  - organise, develop and express ideas using language appropriate to audience, purpose and form
- 

1. To what extent does your comparative study of *Metropolis* and *Nineteen Eighty Four* demonstrate through a consideration of the intertextual perspectives of the characters the importance of having a voice?
2. ‘When we consider the intertextual connections between texts through an exploration of the characters’ perspectives we come to realise the significance of a composer’s purpose and context.’ Focusing on two key characters from *Nineteen Eighty Four* and *Metropolis* examine the influence of purpose and context.
3. ‘Despite differing contexts, *Nineteen Eighty Four* and *Metropolis* present similar warnings regarding control through the perspectives of their characters.’ Discuss how both composers communicated these warnings.
4. Intertextual perspectives of a depleted sense of humanity presented in both Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis* and Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty Four* reminds us of the need to challenge conformity. Do you agree or disagree?
5. How is your understanding of humanity and inhumanity enhanced through an exploration of the intertextual perspectives in Lang’s *Metropolis* and Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*?
6. How have the composers of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Metropolis* explored the exploitation of workers in their texts? In your response, make detailed reference to your prescribed texts.
7. What does your study of intertextual perspectives reveal about representations of oppressive political authority in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Metropolis*? In your response, make detailed reference to your prescribed texts.
8. To what extent does your study of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Metropolis* suggest an understanding of the freedom of individuals? In your response, make detailed reference to both texts?



9. What does your study of intertextual perspectives reveal about representations of oppression in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Metropolis*? In your response, make detailed reference to your prescribed texts.
10. How have the composers of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Metropolis* explored conflict between classes in their texts? In your response, make detailed reference to your prescribed texts.
11. To what extent does your study of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Metropolis* suggest an understanding of reactions to the political contexts of their respective composers? In your response, make detailed reference to both texts?